

Welcome back, Mr.

THU JUL -6 1995

FOOTBALL TEAM

He'll return to East Bay stage today

OAKLAND RAIDERS

ECONOMICS

By David K. Li
STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND — For two weeks, Al Davis has stood quietly behind the scenes while the East Bay has celebrated his decision to bring the Raiders home after 13 years in Los Angeles.

But this morning, Davis will awaken

in his Piedmont home, take a private, chauffeured car to the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum and make his first public appearance in the East Bay in years.

Until today, the only sign of Davis has been his signature at the bottom of his letter of intent — held up jubilantly by Mayor Elihu Harris at a press conference

June 23 — to return the Raiders to Oakland.

Davis' public visit this week comes a day after the Oakland City Council, in the first of two votes it is required to take on the deal, unanimously approved the agreement bringing the team north.

The council and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, which also must approve the deal, have scheduled a special joint session this afternoon to meet with Davis.

"This is an important week for him since this is the first time the public has

heard from him since the announcement," Coliseum President George Vukasin said Wednesday.

First stop for Davis today is a 10:30 a.m. press conference in the Coliseum Exhibit Hall. The question-and-answer session is scheduled to last about 45 minutes. Afterward, a private brunch will give Davis a chance "to mix-and-mingle" with reporters, Vukasin said.

The brunch could last until 1 p.m., and then Davis will drive to City Hall to

Please see **Davis**, A-8

K, Mr. Davis

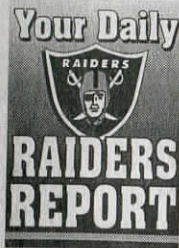
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Please see **Davis**, A-8

a 56,000-square-foot



■ Longtime Raiders season ticket holders will get priority for tickets for the return season. [B-1]

■ The Raiders' record might have been significantly better with the home-field support Oakland fans would have given. [B-1]

■ New quarterbacks coach helps install a modern passing attack. [B-6]

Meet the 'welcome wagon'

with Harris. At 2:30 p.m., also at Oakland City Hall, the council and supervisors will hold their special joint session, where no public testimony will be allowed.

"It's really kind of a welcome wagon," said Supervisor Gail Steele. "It's an opportunity to meet him."

Public testimony will be taken Tuesday, when both panels are to vote on a final contract that will return the Raiders to Oakland. Approval is expected.

No discouraging word

"I haven't taken any formal survey, but so far I haven't heard any (opposition to) this return," Vukasin said.

The rest of the day today will be left to Davis. No private parties are planned.

On Friday, Davis will make a pitch to the business community at a private luncheon organized by Dennis Cuneo, vice president for corporate planning and legal affairs at New United Motors Manufacturing Inc., the Fremont automaker.

While large East Bay corporations will be the primary targets for purchases of the luxury suites, Vukasin said luxury boxes are not ex-

pected to be the main topic of conversation.

"It's not really an effort to sell luxury suites, just a chance to meet the business community, which has supported this," Vukasin said.

Any questions?

Given his low profile, Davis can expect a barrage of questions at the new conference, if not elsewhere, about his momentous decision. They include:

➤ Money or game victories? Did the financial numbers offered by the Coliseum make more sense than a pitch by the Hollywood Park race track to build a new stadium, or was Davis lured by the promise of fielding a team before enthusiastic Oakland fans?

➤ What didn't work in Los Angeles to prompt the return north?

➤ Will the National Football League seek a "relocation fee" for the right to move, and would the Raiders pay it?

➤ How does it feel from a historical perspective to be the first owner to return a major league sports franchise to its birthplace?

➤ Looking back, was leaving Oakland a mistake?

Davis' return is predicated on an \$85 million

plan to upgrade the Coliseum for football.

The renovation deal is based largely on the sale of "personal seating licenses." Fans are being asked to spend \$250 to \$4,000 for the right to buy a season ticket through 2005. The right to buy club seats could cost fans up to \$16,000.

Would-be season ticket holders are asked to make a 25 percent deposit on their personal seating licenses by July 17. Coliseum officials expect to receive more ticket applications than seats.

Lottery plan ready

If demand exceeds supply, a lottery will determine who gets inside the Coliseum. About 800 fans who held Raiders season tickets when the team was last in Oakland and through all 13 years in Los Angeles will be the only ones guaranteed the chance to buy tickets.

Renovation plans call for a 56,000-square-foot stadium club and increased football seating capacity, from 50,699 to 65,500. The Coliseum also plans to add more luxury suites.

Staff writers Stacey Wells and Robert Saladay contributed to this report.

TUE JUL 18 1995

Oakland awaiting Al-tograph

FOOTBALL TEAM

By David K. Li
STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND — The ticket requests are in, the paper work virtually done.

Now all that's left for the Oakland Raiders to become official is one final autograph — from Raiders managing general partner Al Davis.

Although an Oakland Coliseum lease still awaits Davis' elusive signature, East Bay officials see the delay as a matter of diplomacy over punctuality as National Football League owners prepare to meet Friday to discuss the Raiders' proposed move north. Davis apparently is awaiting the league's formal approval of his move before signing the lease, although the maverick owner maintains he does not need permission to relocate the team.

"I don't think there's any need for him to unnecessarily antagonize anyone in the NFL," Oakland City Councilmember Ignacio De La Fuente (Fruitvale-San Antonio) said Monday. "It's going to happen, and this (lack of Davis' signature) isn't slowing us down at all."

Oakland City Manager Craig Kocian and interim Alameda County Administrator Susan Muranishi on Monday formally entered into a joint powers agreement, the administrative move necessary to sell up to \$225 million in bonds to finance Coliseum renovations.

The council and Alameda County Board of Supervisors both

approved the deal last week.

Coliseum President George Vukasin said he met with NFL administrators last week, answering questions about the Coliseum deal with Davis.

"I didn't get the sense there

would be any roadblocks in allowing him to move to Oakland," Vukasin said.

City and county lawmakers had expected Davis to sign off on their agreement Monday. But that forecast came last week, before NFL

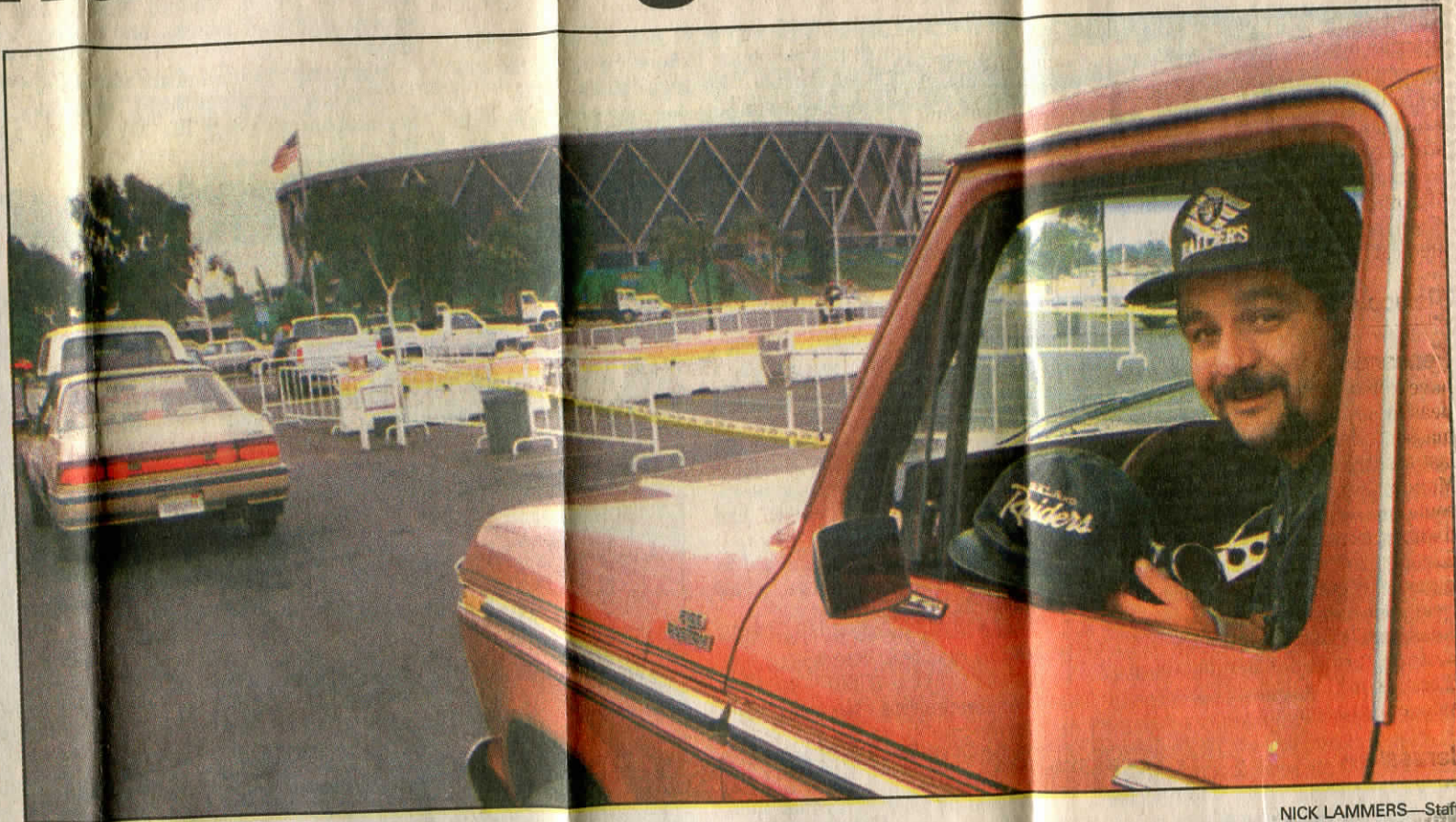
owners postponed their meeting to take up Davis' move.

Davis has always said he does not need league backing to move the Raiders from Los Angeles to Oakland, and Coliseum workers moved feverishly Monday to pre-

pare for ticket sales to the fast-approaching season. The first exhibition game is Aug. 12, against the St. Louis Rams.

Midnight Monday was the dead-

Please see **Raiders**, A-10



NICK LAMMERS—Staff

Rory Guerra of Fremont shows off his Raiders cap while in line at the Coliseum Monday afternoon to hand in his application for tickets.

for seats

Continued from A-9

line for fans to submit season-ticket applications and a 25 percent deposit on the fees. At stake was the opportunity to buy 60,000 personal seat licenses — a costly permit that fans must purchase in order to buy season subscriptions through 2005.

Most of the fees range between \$250 and \$4,000, although some are as high as \$16,000.

About 400 applications arrived in Oakland via overnight mail Monday, as fans made their claim for tickets in person and over telephone lines, said ticket chief Marc Ganis.

"From about yesterday and through all day today, the fax machines have not stopped," said Ganis, president of Sportscorp Ltd., the company handling Raiders season-ticket sales. "It's going well and it's still my goal to sell out the 1995 season on a (personal seat license) basis."

The Coliseum hopes to sell 50,000 season tickets for the upcoming football season and 10,000 additional seat licenses for seats scheduled to be installed by 1996.

Once Coliseum employees gather the ticket applications, the forms will be sent to Phoenix for a computerized lottery of would-be season subscribers, Ganis said.

Staff writer Tyler Cunningham contributed to this report.

FOOTBALL TEAM FRI JUL 14 1995

Raiders' perks: A political football?

OAKLAND RAIDERS - ECONOMICS

WHEN word leaked out that Oakland City Council members and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors might get some nice perks out of the deal that brought the Oakland Raiders home, it upset some Raiders faithful.

The deal was to include a waiver of the Personal Seat License that allows fans to buy Raiders season tickets. The PSLs are valued at from \$250 to \$4,000, depending on seat location.

Councilman Ignacio De La Fuente said the perk was a surprise. But he figured it was the spoils of victory. "If anybody's entitled to that, then we are. We worked very hard to get this deal."

We don't want to be too tough on De La Fuente. He and other council members and Mayor Elihu Harris did work hard, and they delivered the goods. But others worked hard too, and they were volunteers, not elected representatives whose job it was to bring home the Raiders.

While city representatives were pondering the perquisites, the other governmental body instrumental in the return of the Silver and Black, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, took a different approach.

On the motion of Supervisor Ed Camp-

bell, supervisors voted unanimously to include in their acceptance of the Raiders deal the stipulation that "board members will not receive any preferential treatment in obtaining PSLs or other ticket plans."

Supervisors asked that the Coliseum board join in the action. The supervisors made no mention of Oakland City Council members, perhaps because the council had voted already.

Is criticism of the council's PSL deal much ado about nothing? Just a side effect of Raidermania? It depends on your point of view. After all, City Council members and the Board of Supervisors always have enjoyed luxury boxes at the Coliseum for A's baseball home games.

Most elected officials share their largess with their families, friends and supporters, and disclose the benefit in their annual financial disclosure reports.

If the Council holds onto its free seats, it could use them to the economic benefit of Alameda County, by using the boxes as promotional lures. There must be companies out there who would seriously consider moving to Oakland after enjoying a day watching Raiders football from the privacy of a City Council or supervisor's Coliseum box.

SUN JUL - 2 1995

City must invest to

FOOTBALL TEAM

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ET'S, AS THEY say in bridge, review the bidding.

A deal to keep the Raiders in Oakland fell through in 1990. A deal to bring them back in 1995 seems set.

That it is good for Oakland to have the Raiders here is a given, disputed by no one. Nor does anyone deny, anywhere, the obvious fact that to keep or obtain any major league team requires a substantial financial commitment — however to be recouped — by the community involved. **ECONOMICS**

Consider, then, two questions:

1. How does the financial commitment to regain the Raiders compare to the commitment that would have been necessary to keep them here in the first place?

2. Is there a lesson in this whole story for others — like, for instance, San Francisco?

To answer the first, you have to start at the beginning.

In 1961, Oakland and Alameda County decided to build a sports complex in hopes of attracting a major league baseball team. The majors had decided to expand, from 16 to 20 teams, for the first time in 60 years, and five existing teams had moved to new cities in the preceding eight years.

At the same time, a new football league — whose prospects for survival were doubtful — had put a franchise in Oakland, and the NBA Minneapolis Lakers had just moved to Los Angeles, implying more basketball on the West Coast in the future.

Although the main goal was baseball, then supreme among big league sports, the opportunity for football and basketball tenants was evident.

In May 1964, ground was broken for a \$25 million complex, still with no guarantee of baseball or of the future of the AFL. Meanwhile, the NBA Philadelphia Warriors had moved to San Francisco.

In 1966, the Raiders occupied the completed outdoor building just as the AFL merged with the NFL, assuring its permanence. In 1967, the National Hockey League expanded and put a franchise in the indoor building.

In 1968, the A's came from Kansas City and by 1971, the Warriors, having changed their name to Golden State, made Oakland their permanent home.



Leonard Koppett

Evidently, the business decision of 1961 was eminently wise.

By 1979, this was the situation:

The Raiders had the best long-term record in football, now ahead of baseball in public esteem, and had sold out every home game. The A's, finishing first five years in a row and winning three straight World Series, had nevertheless been unable to average a million in attendance.

The Warriors had won an NBA championship, but the hockey team was failing. The Giants, across the Bay, had fallen so far behind the A's that they were actually sold to Toronto, kept in San Francisco only by Bob Lurie's willingness to buy them. The 49ers, in total disarray, had fallen to 2-14 in 1978 and were selling only two-thirds of their available tickets.

Baseball, however, had entered the free-agent era in 1977 and Charlie Finley, who ran the A's on a shoestring, couldn't compete. He decided to sell.

In 1978, the Giants suddenly had a big year and just missed a Bay Area attendance record (1.75 million). The A's, in the years 1977-79, lost 299 games, drawing 495,000, 520,000, and 306,000, less than the Giants drew in one season.

In order to get the A's in 1968, the Coliseum had to give them lease terms far more favorable than those the Raiders had. In 1979, the 15-year Raider lease was running out and the 20-year baseball lease had eight years to go.

Al Davis wanted three items in a new Raiders lease: luxury boxes, which were revolutionizing baseball; early season dates, precluded by the baseball lease's priority; and better terms involving concessions and rent.

And he had a bargaining chip. The Los Angeles Coliseum, by refusing to upgrade, had lost the Rams, their tenant since 1946, to Anaheim. It was promising to do for Davis what it wouldn't do for the Rams.

In the fall of 1979, when the

to keep pro team

49ers were 2-14 again and the Giants back to 20 games below .500 with a 20-percent drop in attendance, the following deal was devised:

The A's would be sold to Denver. Baseball would give the Coliseum \$4 million to buy out the lease, and the Giants would play some home games there. The \$4 million would be applied to luxury boxes for the Raiders, who could also get the other favorable lease terms with baseball out of the way.

At that point, NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle assured Oakland publicly as well as privately that the league would not permit the Raiders to leave. In that case, Oakland had no need to choose between baseball and football: if football was stuck, Oakland could keep both. The A's-to-Denver deal collapsed.

Davis then accepted Los Angeles' promises and moved. Oakland spent \$9 million to lose a futile lawsuit to take the team away from Davis. The NFL lost an antitrust suit costing millions to keep the Raiders out of

Los Angeles.

The Haas family stepped forth to buy the A's from Finley, at the end of 1980, for the sake of the Oakland community. After a few years, the Haases turned the A's into a roaring success, on the field and in community relations.

But they kept losing more and more money in the process, they said, and last year decided to sell. The new owners say they intend to stay in Oakland indefinitely, but make no guarantees.

When the A's asked for loans, facility improvements and better lease terms, the Coliseum complied. When the Raiders showed interest in returning in 1990, having received none of the promised Los Angeles improvements, the Coliseum fashioned an excellent package — essentially the same as the present one — but couldn't deliver in the face of local politics.

Now add it up: with \$4 million from baseball and the \$9 million spent in court, Oakland could have supplied what Davis was asking for

then.

Davis' judgment that a team couldn't compete economically in the old as-is, sold-out Coliseum without boxes has been proven correct by events. Now, consider the \$100 million or more that must be committed (wisely, in my opinion, and recoverable) to do what could have been done for one-tenth that, without 13 years of non-fulfillment for Raiders fans in between.

What Davis sought was reasonable and necessary. The Coliseum's reluctance to let the A's go was understandable in view of Rozelle's assurances. Rozelle, who had just done the opposite in Minneapolis (telling people there that the Vikings could move if they didn't get their downtown dome, which they got promptly), was merely reflecting the arrogance and anti-Davis feeling that permeated the league at the same time.

In fact, all concerned were victims of their own miscalculations.

Davis relied on promises in Los Angeles from people who had failed to deal with the Rams. Oakland relied on Rozelle and made the mistake of going to court.

Lurie lost the chance for Bay Area exclusivity, a prospect in-

herent in his purchase of the Giants when the departure of the A's was already being trumpeted by Finley.

The A's, in turn, lost their crack at exclusivity when the Giants were kept from going to Florida in 1992. And persistent efforts to regain the Raiders, however indirectly, have interfered with nailing down a new deal with the Warriors.

Yet, this is not a unique story. It happened in New York in the 1950s, when \$9 million would have kept the Dodgers in Brooklyn in a privately built downtown dome. It happened in St. Louis in the 1980s, when the football Cardinals could have been kept in place. In Chicago, Baltimore, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Texas, Kansas City and elsewhere, it was decided to keep a team by committing to new facilities.

The correct term for such commitment is "investment."

The lesson: No law says a city has to have any team, but if it does want one, it must be willing to make the necessary investment.

Leonard Koppett is a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., and of the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass.

The gospel according to Al Davis

By Stacey Wells
STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND — This was as close to the second coming as it's going to get — the National Football League version anyway.

There was harmony and agreement. Sunlight streamed in through an open window. Everyone was smiling. And Al Davis spoke, ex cathedra and including football parables.

He told a story of a fan who once asked him to bring his beloved Raiders back to Oakland.

"Keep the torches burning and we'll be back," Davis said. "So here we are."

For a moment Thursday, city and county officials forgot about budget cuts in their poverty-stricken communities, and angry constituents. People were happy. And no one complained as the Oakland City Council and Alameda County Board of Supervisors held a joint meeting in the mayor's cramped conference room to greet the owner of the soon-to-be-again Oakland Raiders.

Councilman Dick Spees, the longest serving board member and one who watched the team leave in 1982 grabbed Davis' hand as he entered the room, pulled him aside and whispered, "Welcome home."

"Sixteen years of waiting for the Raiders return," Spees said later. "We're just so glad you're back."

"I don't remember in a very long time seeing so many people in Alameda County so happy," said Supervisor Gail Steele.

Mayor Elihu Harris gave Davis a lapel pin of the city seal — an oak tree. "The most important thing about this tree is it has deep roots and we want you to plant them here," he said.

Dressed in a pinstriped suit, his hands adorned with two Super Bowl rings, Davis sat and took it all in before a bank of cameras, offering an occasional comment. He spoke softly and maintained his polished

demeanor.

"We've got a long way to go yet," he told the crowd of more than 50 who gathered for the 20-minute meeting. "This is like signing the Declaration of Independence. But you've got to implement it. You've got to make it right."

When asked to talk about hurdles that remain before the Raiders play at the Oakland Coliseum, Davis would only say that "forces on the outside" may try and derail the team's return.

He apologized for refusing to elaborate. "We're going to go through this in a way we think is clean."

Official documents between the team and coliseum must be signed, but Davis indicated that this will be a formality. City and county approval of the Raiders return is expected to glide through next week.

The biggest unknown is the National Football League, which must approve the team's departure from Los Angeles and return to Oakland. The league could try and fine Davis a "relocation fee" and it's still unclear if the team would pay it. Davis cautioned against believing that the NFL team owners treat every team the same.

The City Council and Board of Supervisors are scheduled to vote in separate meetings Tuesday on a financing package that will bring the Raiders back to Oakland. After public testimony, both boards are expected to approve the agreement that includes \$90 million in bonds for coliseum renovations, a \$31.9 million relocation loan, and \$10 million for a new practice facility.

Debt repayment on the bonds would be met by season-ticket sales, eliminating the risk to taxpayers, according to proponents of the deal. Fans will be required to pay from \$250 to \$4,000 to reserve their right to buy one of the 50,000 season tickets. To date, the coliseum has received about 70,000 inquiries about the plan.